2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
FQ5 Bemba FQ5

137 trees that have not been checked by the late fires continue to put on new green leaves. By mid-rains grass and undergrowth has sprung up higher than a man's head and the bush looks quite impenetrable a few yards ahead. Young shoots stand a foot or two high all over the motor tracks. With the turn of the cold weather the country dries up once more. Dust lies six inches deep along the roads and coats the leaves and branches of the trees about 500 yards each side.

487 Access to the Bemba country has always been easy, at any rate along its western and southern borders. The history of the country is one of a series of invasions from the Katanga Basin to the west up the big rivers such as the Luapula. One of the main Arab trade-routes also passed across the district from north-east to south-west, and this fact materially influenced the history of the people during the nineteenth century. Although the railway line bends N.W. at Broken Hill, four hundred miles to the south of the district, the Cape to Cairo motor route passes right across it, and the natives have easy access to the mining districts of Northern Rhodesia and the Congo. Motor roads (earth tracks would be a better description) serve to connect the head-quarters of the district. But the life of the country still moves in a single file along the native paths, except where a few big rivers and swamps make it possible to use dug-out canoes.

● 132 The climate is of an inter-tropical type. The country lies south of the equator, but the plateau stands at an average height of 4,000 ft. above sea-level and the nights are almost invariably cool and even cold, whatever the temperature by day. The seasonal variations in climate are very marked. In the hot season of the year, which falls between August and November, the temperature varies from an annual average minimum of 61° to a maximum of 89°. Between 1925–31 the highest temperature reached was 108°. In the hot months the weather is oppressive, ending in heavy thunderstorms. At the end of this time the ground is hard and impossible to cultivate, and the forest fires have swept the country. The rivers are low and in some cases dried up.

The rains break at the end of October or the beginning of November, and the maximum rainfall—is usually experienced in December. The average annual fall varies from three inches in November to over nine inches in December and January. There is occasionally a temporary break (*icilala*) in the weather at

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
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the end of January, but the rains continue unabated until the end of March or April. The rain is usually ample for cultivation purposes, although the heaviest fall may come at an inconvenient time for the Bemba staple crop. 132

The wet season is followed by a dry and windy season which lasts from April to July. During these months dry, gusty winds blow almost continuously, and the temperature falls to a minimum in July (between 51° and 77°). The nights are unpleasantly chilly, with ground frost in specially high districts. The rivers begin to recede. These are the harvest months, and the season in which the new millet gardens are prepared.

Bemba cultivation is entirely dependent on this type of rainfall and is limited in most cases to the production of one crop a year instead of two as in those parts of Tanganyika where there is a double rainy season. [241 171]

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Calendar of Events.

The weather during the month of observation must first be described, since this naturally affected the food available and the energy of the villagers. It was typical of September in this part of the world, a month of change between the end of the cold season and the beginning of the hot season. In the first week driving winds blew and the sky was often cloudy and sometimes grey. On one day the men declared it too cold to go off to their tree-cutting, and on another the women waited to grind till late in the morning because, they said, their hands were cold and slipped on the stone. The dead leaves had already fallen, and the forest turned crimson with the new young growth. It became hotter and the people more languid. Children sat about in the shade at noon and seemed too tired to run or to play violent games. There is a curious air of suspension about a native village in the hot weather. Women sit inside their hut doors and talk interminably in low murmurs, and the young girls lounge in groups of four and five in the shade and throw round polished seeds up in the air and catch them on the backs of their knuckles, a game which they play by fits and starts in a desultory way. One asked me to talk to her 'because of the boredom that is in a village when the weather is hot'.[1] By the 18th hot winds had begun to spring up, and on the 26th the first shower of thunder-rain fell. The wet weather set in in earnest in November. These notes on the climatic changes of this month should be considered in relation to the work done by the villagers during this time (cf. Chap. XVIII). I believe the slackening off of labour in this month is not only caused by uncertainty as to the coming of the rains, but also lack of energy due to the sultry heat.

Details of the activities of the people are set out below. This calendar is intended to give an impression of the work of the community as a whole, and any events such as a beer-drink or the killing of a buck, which affected the food-supply of the village.[2] Some of the notes, particularly those on the work done by the men, are unnecessarily full for a study of the food-supply proper, but they are included here in order to give some idea of the irregular

[1] *Citendwa ca muno mushi pa lusuba.*

[2] From 13 September to 1 October notes on the work of each member of the village were taken. Before this time, general observations only.

2:Richards E-5 (1930-1934)1939
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CALENDAR OF SEASONAL ACTIVITIES

Bemba months	*English equivalents*	*Weather*	*Food-supply*	MEN			WOMEN		
				Millet	*Subsidiary*	*Other activities*	*Gardening*		*Other activities*
Kabengele kanono	January	Heavy rain	Hunger month	..	Mound-digging and sowing	*Fishing.* Traps and nets set on flooded banks	..	Mound digging and sowing	Collecting mushrooms and caterpillars.
Kabengele kakalamba	February	..	Hunger month. Cucurbits ripe	Fencing gardens	.. ..	Build houses (new village)	..	.. ..	.. ..
Kutumpu	March	Rain slackening	Subsidiary crops ripe	..	.. ..	.. ..	Harvest (maize)	..	Collecting caterpillars.
Shinde	April	Rains cease	Early millet ripe	..	..	Fish weirs set	Harvest (millet—early)	..	.. ..
Kapepo kanono	May	Cold weather	Ample food-supply	Tree-cutting	..	.. ..	Harvest (millet—main crop)	Harvest (groundnuts)	..
Kapepo kakalamba	June	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	..	..	.. .. Piling branches	.. ..	..
Cikungulu pepo	July	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	..	..	.. ..	.. ..	..
Lipukutu lunono	August	Hot weather	.. ..	.. ..	Dry weather sowing	Fish-poisoning. Net-hunting begins	.. ..	Dry weather sowing	Collecting wild spinaches. Fish-poisoning.
Lipukutu lukalamba	September	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	Fish-poisoning. Net-hunting	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..
Lusuba lunono	October	.. ..	Lean food	Firing gardens	..	.. ..	Firing gardens	..	Fish-poisoning.
Lusuba lukalamba	November	Early rains	Getting scarce	.. ..	Mound digging and sowing	Fish-spearing and trapping on flats	..	Mound digging and sowing	Fruits.
Mupundu	December	Mid-rains	Hunger month	Sowing main crop	.. ..	..	Sowing main crop	.. ..	Collecting mushrooms.
Cinshi kubili	No English equivalent. The 13th month	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..	.. ..

39 221
805
462
262
132

considered here but will be discussed in a forthcoming section concerned with the peoples of the eastern shore of southern Lake Tanganyika and adjacent regions.

In brief, the Bemba-Lala-Lamba-Kaonde groups, with their closely related sub-groups, occupy almost the whole of North-eastern Rhodesia and the northern parts of North-western Rhodesia, besides adjacent areas of the Belgian Congo.

With the exception of the swamp-dwelling groups, the Unga and the Twa, all live under broadly similar conditions. Plentiful rainfall waters the generally unproductive plateau soils covered by deciduous woodland. The density of population which such land can carry is small, reaching only to about 12 persons per square mile, and this figure is not exceeded, or even approached, except in reserves where local over-population of a serious nature occurs, and in the swamp areas where inundation creates a land shortage either permanent or seasonal. The total population of the selected groups can be reckoned to be about 440,000.

GENERAL CULTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

The languages of these peoples are closely similar, so much so that the whole group of peoples in this area has been loosely termed "Bemba-speaking".(1) Guthrie, however, distinguishes within one of his linguistic zones *Bemba* with *Aushi* as a sub-dialect; *Tabwa* with *Shila* as a sub-dialect; and a further group of closely related languages, *Bisa*, *Lamba*, *Lala*, *Seuka*, and *Sevo*.(2) He places *Kaonde* in a different linguistic zone, L, because it has certain distinct features, such as a single prefix in independent nominals, which make it more closely related to the Luba group of languages. No mention is made of the languages spoken by other small groups closely related to the Bemba, such as Chishinga, Mukulu, Ngumbo, Kawendi, and Bwile. What little is known about the languages spoken by the Unga and Twa suggests that they may be closely related to Bisa.

There is apparently little linguistic evidence to support the tradition held by all these peoples that they originated in areas west of the Luapula from peoples of Luba stock, although Richards says that Bemba told her that archaic words they used in ceremonies at their Paramount's court were "Ciluba".

These people practise shifting cultivation with finger millet as the staple crop in the east and cassava in the west. The absence of cattle in the area distinguishes them from the Mambwe to the north and some of the Ngoni to the east. The greater part of the area lies within the tsetse belt, but Lambo mentions that cattle were used as marriage payments among the Lala, and a few goats and sheep are kept by the Bemba and probably by other tribes. Hunting was highly developed in the west of the area before the arrival of Europeans and hunting guilds and associations are recorded.

(1) Richards, C., 1939, p. 16, and Moffat Thomson, 1934.
(2) Guthrie, 1948. A zone is both a geographical and a linguistic concept in that the languages within it have both linguistic affinities and geographical propinquity.

4:Whiteley E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5

separation from the Lunda, the Aushi were led by one Mawe, a commoner, who 'discovered' *Mukumbo* and whose son Chabala became the first Paramount Chief. This Chabala was subsequently killed in a disastrous war with Kazembe's Lunda but was avenged by *Mukumbo* who forthwith despatched a famine to the victors who had to sue for forgiveness. *Mukumbo* subsequently saved the Aushi again in an equally unsuccessful resistance against the Ba-Yeke.(1) The later history of the group in the closing years of the last century and the first thirty of this was occupied with a series of disputes over the paramountcy. While previously the Paramount held both secular and spiritual power - as guardian of *Mukumbo* - this period witnessed the split of the paramountcy into two, a secular and a spiritual chief. This division of function lasted until 1933.

The *Unga* are thought to be of Luba origin, and to have migrated with the Bemba and other groups in the 18th century from the west, subsequently splitting off from them with the Mukulu and Ngumbu, who later came under Aushi authority.(2) With the Chishinga and Kawendi they form a closely related block. In fact the Unga trace their ultimate descent from an ancestress, Kaundamwelwa, from whose daughters the Ngumbu, Mukulu, Chishinga and Unga trace their more immediate ancestry.(3) Their later history is one of inter-tribal quarrels and of occasional raids by the Bemba when the water-level in the swamps fell low enough to permit land-travel.

The *Twa*, one of a number of swamp-dwelling peoples of that name,(4) seem to have been well established in the area at the time when the Unga arrived.(5) Von Rosen, who spent some time in the area with a Swedish ethnological expedition, considers that they, along with the other groups in the area, originally came from the Congo and were of Luba stock.(6) They were at enmity with the Unga until very recently - 1943 - and as early as 1916 were made to settle at Kansenga outside Unga territory, but throughout the years of contact have intermarried freely with the Unga.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The soils of the area are generally poor, of a thin sandy character, and are covered by deciduous woodland, predominantly of the type *Brachystegia-Isoberlinia*. In the Lake Basin, however, a high grass woodland (*chipya*) predominates, in which very tall grass grows mixed in with various types of tree. Largely deciduous, this type of woodland is remarkable for dense evergreen thickets.

The climate is characterised by a single rainy season in which generally more than adequate rainfall is assured. On the Central Plateau an average of 45 inches per year is customary, decreasing in the east and north-west and rising in the Lake Basin area.

The annual mean variation of temperature on the Central Plateau appears to be 55°-84°F.

(1) Mees and Boone, 1935. see Ba-Yeke.
(2) See Philpot, 1936.
(3) Brelsford, S, 1946.
(4) Anon., N.A.O.A. 1948.
(5) Brelsford, op.cit.
(6) Von Rosen, 1914.

4: Whiteley E-4 (no date) 1950 FQ5 Bemba FQ5
Senga

valley, and the substantial stockades of Senga chiefs on which Fraser[1] commented bore witness to the fear in which these raiders were held. 174

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

As stated above the Senga inhabit the Upper Luangwa valley, at an altitude of some 3,000 ft. decreasing to the south. It is a region for which adequate climatological data are not available but the rainfall is probably less than on the Plateau with an average of 30-35" annually. The probable temperature range is from 65°F. (mean min.) to 88°F. (mean max.). 132 133

The soils generally are more fertile than those on the Plateau, especially close to the river, and are of a heavier texture and darker colour. A type of woodland (*Isoberlinia - Globiflora - Brachystegia*) common to the Plateau is found on the western banks of the Luangwa, but the valley floor and the eastern banks are covered with *Lupane* scrub-land, in which the trees attain a fair height near the river but are stunted towards the escarpment. 134 137

MAIN FEATURES OF ECONOMY

The shifting cultivation on the sterile soils of the Plateau gives way in the valley, potentially at any rate, to semi-permanent cultivation. Maize, finger millet and Kaffir corn are the most important crops, each of which is found locally as a staple. There are various sequences, from a millet-Kaffir corn sequence in northern districts to a millet-Kaffir corn or maize-groundnut sequence in districts in contact with the mixed Bisa-Cewa groups of the Middle Luangwa and on the eastern banks towards Lundazi. 241

In both sequences new sites are first cleared of trees and the branches and brushwood burnt. Later, in the first sequence, the grass which grows up in the clearing is cut down and left to rot helped by the first rain; this forms the seed bed for the millet - some maize had already been scattered before the grass was cut - and little subsequent weeding is carried out. Kaffir corn may be sown in the following year or, alternatively, in the third year after a second millet crop. A few pumpkins and cucurbits are also found.

In the second sequence, after preliminary clearing, there is less tendency to use rotting grass as a seed bed, but to leave it standing to manure subsequent crops. Millet is planted with maize and in the following year Kaffir corn and maize are planted in varying proportions in a seed bed of grass-manure left from the previous year. In some areas maize may be planted alone and a simple millet-maize sequence carried on for up to ten years. On lighter soils groundnuts may be planted in the third year.

Apart from this groundnuts are normally grown in separate gardens. Small gardens for maize in the dry season and rice cultivation are locally found, as is tobacco, particularly in Chinsali district. Village gardens are not properly found in the area but small plots of sweet potatoes, cassava, beans and pawpaw are commonly found near villages.

(1) Fraser, 1914.

Luapula Peoples

175 Some Tabwa came with the British South African Company, and a group of Mambwe followed the missionaries to Mbereshi. From 1910 until 1922, when the villages returned to their old sites, the river belt had to be evacuated owing to the menace of sleeping sickness. The development of mining in the Katanga and the Copperbelt created a demand for labour and opened a market for the Luapula fish. The expansion of the fish trade organised by Greek refugees in the late 1920s stimulated a new influx of immigrants to the valley, many of them from across the Belgian Congo border. The present Kazembe, Chinyanta Nankula, is the fourteenth holder of the office.

LANGUAGE

197 The various dialects of Bemba (*Shila, Tabwa, Lungu, Aushi, Cinalunda*) spoken in the valley are not necessarily related to the tribal origins of the people. Cinalunda is a Bemba dialect with a slight Kampokolo admixture. The use of *Cilunda*, the language of the western (Congo) Lunda, and of its modified form, *Kampokolo*, (1) has never spread beyond the court circles. Both died out during the nineteenth century and now only survive in the traditional praise-formulae composed for each Kazembe on his accession, and as the drum-language. [202]

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

133 Rapid-free and easily navigable in its lower course, the Luapula flows towards Lake Mweru at an altitude of some 3,000 feet down a flat, trough-like valley in which "sandstones of the Katanga system, granites and other rocks are overlaid by deep soil accumulations". (2) The flat floor of the valley rises steeply to the Chishinga plateau and more gently to the Kundelungu range on the Congo side. The river, in places overgrown by sudd vegetation, carries masses of floating papyrus. Except for a ten-mile stretch at Lukwesa and a four-mile one at Chisenga, its eastern bank is bordered by a belt of permanent swamp widening towards Lake Mweru. Sandbanks and patches of hard land are more in evidence down the western side. The swampy, seasonally flooded margin, up to ten miles wide, is studded with pools and lagoons and intersected by transverse channels giving access to the river from the villages. Flood-plain grasslands are burned in the dry season. The adjacent strip of fertile, alluvial land, not subject to floods, contains practically the whole population of the Rhodesian side. Further east, towards the escarpment, stretches for some twenty miles a bush-covered, almost uninhabited no-man's-land (*mulunda*) well stocked with wild fauna. Slow-flowing streams make their way down the open grassy *dambo* valleys to the Luapula.

132 The climate is of the savannah type with a single rainy season from October-November to April-May. The annual rainfall, lower in the valley than on the sheltering plateau, ranges from 36 inches at Chiengi (which lies on the Lake Mweru basin but outside Kazembe's kingdom) to 46 inches at Johnston Falls. (3) The mean minimum temperature at Chiengi, (the only records available) is 66.4°F. (4)

(1) Valdes, II, pp. 228 and 243.
(2) Trapnell, 1943, p.1.
(3) ibid, p.2.
(4) ibid, p.3.